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For Immediate Release

FCC CHAIRWOMAN ROSENWORCEL INTRODUCES NEW SPECTRUM RULES FOR COMMERCIAL SPACE LAUNCHES

Commission Will Consider a Report and Order to Bring Certainty to Communications Needs of Commercial Space Launches

WASHINGTON, July 28, 2023—FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel today shared with her colleagues final rules to ensure spectrum certainty for communications services used during commercial space launches. As private companies have assumed a vital role in the launch and operation of space satellites, scientific exploration, and transportation of astronauts both for public and commercial purposes, they need access to reliable and predictable wireless communications services and these new rules, if adopted by a vote of the full Commission, will make that resource available.

“The next-generation Space Age is already here. We are seeing more commercial space activity at the agency than ever before, and our overall approach as the designated commercial spectrum regulator must reflect that reality,” **said Chairwoman Rosenworcel**. “These rules will ensure commercial space launches have the necessary spectrum resources for reliable communications no matter their mission. These updates will promote economic strength, safety, competitiveness, and innovation. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this latest action to continue the United States’ long history of space leadership.”

The rules would adopt a new allocation in the 2025 to 2110 MHz band for space operations on a secondary basis, expand the spectrum available for commercial space operations on secondary basis in the 2200 to 2290 MHz band from four channels to the entire band, and adopt licensing and technical rules for space launch operations. It also directs the Office of Engineering and Technology to issue a public notice opening a new docket for comments on the expanded federal use of the non-federal satellite bands. They would also amend the allocation for the 399.9 to 400.05 MHz band to permit the deployment of Federal space stations. This proposal also includes a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which would take further comment to inform possible further actions.

Chairwoman Rosenworcel also thanked the FCC’s partners in this work: “We greatly appreciate the productive engagement from the Administration, led by our friends at NTIA. The thoughtful input in this proceeding from NASA, the Department of Defense, industry participants and others have informed this action and helped ensure we can move forward while protecting federal and private spectrum users.”

Today’s action is the latest initiative in the FCC’s Space Innovation agenda. As part of this agenda, the FCC established its new Space Bureau and took action to speed up regulatory review processes, increased the number of staff working on satellite applications, created new opportunities for competition in the delivery of satellite broadband services, and modernized

spectrum policy to better meet the needs of the next generation Space Age. As the agency promotes Space Innovation, it also has taken action to advance space safety and responsibility, including by adopting new rules for deorbiting satellites to address orbital debris risks.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).